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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
LANSING

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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM 2013 - 26

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2013

DATE: December 13, 2012

TO: Executive Policy Team
Administrative Management Team
Wardens

FROM: Daniel H. Heyns, Director

SUBJECT: Prisoner Observation Aide Program

SUPERSEDES DOM 2012 - 32 (effective 9/20/12)

Pursuant to PD 04.06.115 "Suicide Prevention", a prisoner must remain under direct and continuous staff observation while in an observation room due to suicidal or self-injurious behavior until a management plan that reduces the prisoner's suicide risk level is implemented. The Federal Bureau of Prisons implemented a program using specially selected and trained prisoners to observe prisoners on observation status instead of relying solely on staff. In addition to resulting cost savings, studies suggest a suicidal or self-injurious prisoner may be more willing to talk about the motivational factors for his/her behavior with another prisoner who has a greater ability to cope while incarcerated. This potentially may result in the prisoner ceasing or decreasing his/her episodes of suicidal and/or self-injurious behavior.

This Department is piloting a Prisoner Observation Aide Program at the Ionia Correctional Facility, Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, and Woodland Correctional Facility. The Program may be expanded to other institutions as identified by the Deputy Director of Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA). Similar to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Program uses specially selected and trained prisoners to observe suicidal or self-injurious prisoners as required under PD 04.06.115. In addition, with approval of the Warden, these prisoners may be used to observe prisoners in a mental health setting who are ordered by a psychiatrist to remain under one-on-one direct observation.

Prisoners selected for the Prisoner Observation Aide Program shall be classified as a Prisoner Observation Aide or an alternative work classification that encompasses the same responsibilities as the Prisoner Observation Aide classification. Prisoners shall be selected for this work assignment based on their ability and willingness to provide this service but also for their emotional stability, reliability, and credibility with both prisoners and staff. Other selection criteria may be utilized as determined by the CFA Deputy Director or designee, including misconduct history. The pay for this assignment shall be the highest daily rate of the Advanced Education/Training Pay Scale (i.e., \$3.24)

for each 24 hour period during which the prisoner is called-out for the assignment. The prisoner may be classified to another work or school assignment while on this assignment. However, due to OMNI rules that will not allow dual work assignments to be entered, this assignment must be manually tracked if the prisoner has another work assignment.

In conjunction with the Administrator of the Bureau of Health Care Services (BHCS), Operations Support Administration, the CFA Deputy Director shall ensure that appropriate training is provided to prisoners assigned to the Prisoner Observation Aide Program. The training shall include instruction on the prisoner's duties and responsibilities as an observer as well as instruction in record-keeping, handling emergencies, basic communication skills, active listening skills, and maintaining confidentiality. Follow-up training shall be provided at least annually. Only prisoners who have received this training shall be utilized as an observer.

Each institution with a Prisoner Observation Aide Program shall have a Prisoner Observation Aide Program Committee. The Committee shall include the Classification Director and a Resident Unit Manager, Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor, or other appropriate staff designated by the Warden, one of whom shall be designated to chair the committee. The committee also shall include a Qualified Mental Health Professional designated by the Warden after consultation with the Mental Health Services Unit Chief. The Committee shall be responsible for screening and selecting prisoners for assignment to the Program, ensuring adequate observation coverage is available. Prisoners may be removed from this assignment at the discretion of the Prisoner Observation Aide Program Committee. Since this is a voluntary assignment, a prisoner assigned to the Program also may request removal for any reason. The request shall not be considered a refusal and shall not result in any negative work results solely to the request.

The Chairperson of the Prisoner Observation Aide Program Committee shall serve as the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator shall be responsible for maintaining a roster of all trained observers at his/her facility, ensuring a current copy is available in the Control Center for reference during non-business hours. The Program Coordinator also shall be responsible for overseeing scheduling of the observers. In addition, the Program Coordinator shall meet at least quarterly with the observers to review procedures, discuss issues, and supplement training.

Prisoner observer aides ordinarily will work a three-hour shift. Except under unusual circumstances, an observer aide shall not work more than six hours in a 24-hour period. Observer aides shall be strip-searched prior to and immediately after reporting to the assignment. Observer aides must maintain unrestricted one-on-one visual observation of the prisoner being observed at all times. Although the observer aide may communicate with the prisoner being observed, at no time shall the observer aide counsel or give advice to the prisoner. Observer aides shall not be provided or allowed to have access to medical, psychiatric, or commitment files of the prisoner being observed and shall not be provided or allowed to access any confidential information on the prisoner.

While on assignment, prisoner observer aides shall be supervised by designated staff in the immediate area of the observation room. The observer aide shall document his/her visual observation of the prisoner every 15 minutes in the Prisoner Observation Aide Documentation Report and document any unusual or significant event as it occurs. Custody staff shall review and initial the report when making required rounds. The observer aide shall immediately alert staff if the prisoner being observed is in

apparent distress or engaging in self-injurious or other behavior that may indicate the need for staff intervention. Whenever an observer aide alerts staff of such behavior, staff must immediately respond and take appropriate action. At the end of each session, the observer aide shall meet with designated unit staff for debriefing. If observation continues with a different observer aide, staff shall ensure that observer aide is provided information regarding any issues/concerns raised during the prior observation session.